



## 2023 LGA Peer Challenge Action Plan

Recommendations by Peer Team	St Albans City and District Council Actions	Timescales
<p><b>Recommendation 1</b></p> <p>Make closing the budget gap for 24/25 everyone's top priority</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• develop the plan and communicate</li> <li>• sweat your assets</li> <li>• resource your priorities – do less, better</li> <li>• look for opportunities with partners and stakeholders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bring forward the budget planning cycle to provide more time in 2023/24 to consider the budget and develop options to close the gap. Set out a clear timetable and communicate to councillors and staff.</li> <li>• Involve the whole Council in identifying opportunities for budget savings and income growth.</li> <li>• Make resource decisions aligned to the priorities set out in the Council Plan; bring forward development of the Council Plan 2024-29 to enable this.</li> <li>• Review the next phase of the transformation programme to strengthen delivery of financial savings, visioning and staff engagement.</li> </ul>	<p>Throughout 2023/24, with an intense period of activity during June to December.</p> <p>Report approach to Strategy and Resources Committee on 29 June 2023.</p> <p>Throughout 2023/24</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• deliver transformation – with council wide ownership</li> </ul>	<p><b>Lead Officer(s):</b> Strategic Leadership Team</p>	
<p><b>Recommendation 2</b></p> <p>Clarify the operation of the committee system</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• roles and responsibilities of officers and councillors</li> <li>• rationalise service committees</li> <li>• do scrutiny, finance and performance (at a strategic level) in service committees</li> <li>• investigate and adopt best practice for committee system</li> </ul>	<p>Clarify the roles and responsibilities of officers and councillors at the post-election Councillor Induction sessions.</p> <p>Invite Council to consider changes to the Committee System of Governance at its meeting in May 2023 to address the suite of governance recommendations made by the CPC:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To decommission the Regeneration &amp; Business Committee to reduce duplication with other Service Committees</li> <li>• To rename the Policy Committee as the Strategy &amp; Resources Committee to better reflect its function and focus on strategy, with some responsibilities transferring (notably, to the Planning Policy &amp; Climate Committee, as outlined below)</li> <li>• To formalise the Local Plan Advisory Group to operate as a Service Committee entitled “Planning Policy &amp; Climate Committee” with an associated Chair and Vice Chair, who are both Lead Councillors.</li> <li>• To transfer the scrutiny functions directly to Service Committees, now to be referred to by the umbrella term “Service and Scrutiny Committees”. Create scrutiny mechanisms for these committees and enshrine in the Constitution including Questions to Lead Councillors, and Councillors’ Items. Decommission the Overview &amp; Scrutiny Committee.</li> <li>• To establish a Constitution Committee.</li> </ul>	<p>Complete</p> <p>Actions complete - Council agreed the <a href="#">Changes to the Committee System of Governance</a> on 24 May 2023.</p> <p>First meeting of the Constitution</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To undertake a review of the system's operation and effectiveness after 6 months.</li> </ul> <p><b>Lead Officer(s):</b> Strategic Director – Customer, Business and Corporate Support.</p>	<p>Committee scheduled for 19 July 2023.</p> <p>December 2023/January 2024</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 3</b></p> <p>Co-develop and communicate a long-term vision for the district</p> <p><b>Recommendation 4</b></p> <p>Clarify what type of growth you want to achieve in advance of the local plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete the Local Plan Regulation 18 consultation.</li> <li>Distil the type of growth we want to achieve from the draft Local Plan as the basis for developing a long-term vision for the District.</li> <li>Align the work to develop the Local Plan with co-development of a long-term vision for the District. This work also to align with the development of the Cultural Strategy, the Economic Development Strategy, our resident survey work, and the Council Plan, all of which are interlinked. Involve partners throughout.</li> </ul> <p><b>Lead Officer(s):</b> Strategic Leadership Team</p>	<p>Summer/Autumn 2023</p> <p>2023</p> <p>2023 - 2024</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 5</b></p> <p>Develop and build staff confidence to take decisions at the right level at the right time</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Undertake a review of the scheme of delegation with the objective of streamlining decision-making processes. Assistant Directors and service managers to be given the autonomy to make decisions within their services, with the appropriate checks and balances in place to assure effective leadership. (Links to Recommendation 2 above).</li> </ul>	<p>Summer/Autumn 2023 (underway)</p>

<p><b>Recommendation 6</b></p> <p>Streamline decision making processes – review delegations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and empower staff to take responsibility for some of the partnership connections currently supported by the Leader and Chief Executive to create resilience and mitigate risks to partner relationships.</li> <li>• As part of the development of the new People Strategy, undertake a staff survey to understand the extent to which they feel confident to take decisions and identify any barriers they face. Develop a plan to address barriers identified.</li> <li>• Analyse annual learning and development requirements alongside staff survey results to build a two-year Learning and Development Plan which supports confidence building of staff and coaching skills development for managers.</li> </ul> <p><b>Lead Officer(s):</b> Strategic Director – Customer, Business and Corporate Support.</p>	<p>2023/24</p> <p>Autumn 2023</p> <p>Autumn 2023</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 7</b></p> <p>Develop councillors (skills and knowledge) – implement succession planning to grow leadership capacity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agree cross-party nominations to the Councillor Development Steering Group.</li> <li>• Steering Group to review Councillor Development Plan.</li> </ul>	<p>Nominations to be made by Strategy &amp; Resources Committee in Summer 2023</p> <p>June/July 2023</p> <p>2023/34</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Group Leaders to be asked to consider their group succession planning and leadership capacity.</li> </ul> <p><b>Lead Officer(s):</b> Democratic Services Manager</p>	
<p><b>Recommendation 8</b></p> <p>Review and develop your strategy for communications – celebrate your success</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Undertake an LGA Communications Health Check to support development of a corporate communications strategy.</li> <li>Consider recommendations and implement as appropriate.</li> </ul> <p><b>Lead Officer(s):</b> Strategy and Policy Manager</p>	<p>20 June 2023</p> <p>2023/34</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 9</b></p> <p>Agree your approach to shared services - continue to build on the progress to increase service resilience and promote efficiency.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue to identify services where shared approaches would benefit the organisations concerned through increasing resilience and promoting efficiency.</li> <li>Review the current incremental approach to shared service, garner political appetite for further integration and consider agreeing a corporate approach with strategic principles to develop a longer-term programme.</li> </ul> <p><b>Lead Officer(s):</b> Strategic Leadership Team</p>	<p>Throughout 2023/24</p>

<p><b>Recommendation 10</b></p> <p>Complete work to establish an effective performance management framework which focuses on delivery of outcomes and creates a 'golden thread' of connection between the new Council Plan and individual performance management.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete work to develop a new performance framework for the Council which focuses on the delivery of outcomes. Centre the approach on the Council's corporate priorities set out in the Council Plan, with scrutiny at a strategic level by service committees for oversight and governance. Undertake this work within the context of emerging performance monitoring requirements being developed by the Office for Local Government.</li> <li>• Develop new approach to service planning across service delivery teams. Service plans to align with Council Plan priorities.</li> <li>• Targets for staff members to align with service plans such that everyone understands how their work supports the delivery of the Council Plan.</li> </ul> <p><b>Lead Officer(s):</b> Strategy and Policy Manager</p>	<p>Summer and Autumn 2023 (and in line with the OFLOG timescales)</p> <p>Autumn/Winter 2023</p> <p>March 24 onwards in line with appraisal timescales.</p>
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